

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T CAIRO 19319

EXDIS

FOR LEWIS FROM EILTS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EG IS
SUBJECT: BEGIN'S USE OF THE GERMAN "PEACEFUL RELATIONS"
- ANALOGY

I HAVE NOTED MR. BEGIN'S FREQUENT ALLUSION TO THE GERMAN MODEL OF BUILDING "PEACEFUL RELATIONS" WITH NEIGHBORS EVEN WITHOUT PEACE TREATIES AND HIS SUGGESTION THAT THIS MIGHT BE APPLIED IN THE CASE OF EGYPT AND THE ARAB STATES AS WELL. THE CONCEPT IS CLEARLY A GOOD ONE, BUT THE ANALOGY IS ONE WHICH MANY EGYPTIANS RESENT. THEY POINT OUT THAT GERMANY WAS DEFEATED AFTER WORLD WAR II, HENCE HAD NO CHOICE. SUSPICIOUS AS THEY ARE OF BEGIN'S MOTIVES, THEY VIEW HIS SUGGESTION AS IMPLYING THAT EGYPT WAS ALSO DEFEATED IN 1973 AND SHOULD, THEREFORE, ACT ON A GERMAN PATTERN. THEY POINT TO THE MUCH VAUNTED, BUT NOW SHATTERED BAR LEV LINE AS THE SYMBOL OF THEIR MILITARY SUCCESS AND ARE CONVINCED THAT HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR MASSIVE INFUSION OF AMERICAN EQUIPMENT, THEY WOULD HAVE DEFEATED THE ISRAELIS. IT IS PART OF THE NATIONAL MYTH THAT EGYPT WON THE 1973 WAR AND MYTHS DIE HARD. THUS, WHEN MR. BEGIN SUGGESTS THAT THE EGYPTIANS SHOULD ACT AS THE
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DEFEATED GERMANS DID, THE EGYPTIANS SEE RED. HE MAY NOT MEAN THAT, BUT THAT'S THE PERSPECTIVE IN WHICH MANY EGYPTIANS SEE HIS PERTINENT COMMENT. EILTS

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NNN

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